

9.17.04 CPR Hearing (Fresno)

Speaking Points

Good afternoon

Chairman and Madam Chair,

I appreciate the opportunity to speak before your commission today.

The California Performance Review provides the State with a valuable opportunity to examine how we can be more efficient in delivering services to the people of California.

I find that many of the individual recommendations would move California toward a more efficient, effective, and accountable government. However, there are some that cause great concern.

First, I believe CPR has not provided sufficient evidence that the State needs to eliminate the California Air Resources Board.

- The Air Resources Board has been a bi-partisan air regulatory agency whose strong commitment to public health and science has never wavered.
- A world leader in promoting hybrid vehicles, and controlling greenhouse gas and other emissions from vehicles and gross polluters, CARB's analysis and regulations were instrumental in driving a 90% improvement in conventional vehicles in the United States.
- CARB has greatly improved the air quality in the most polluted city in America, Los Angeles. LA exceeded U.S. standards for ozone pollution (smog) only 41 days in 1999, down nearly 80 percent from the late 1970's when the region saw excessive smog about 200 days each year.
- CARB's and our next battle will be where you are today – the San Joaquin Valley, which is now one of the most polluted basins in the Country.

Second, the elimination of CARB would not accomplish any significant objective other than to save an unsubstantial amount of money. Considering the cost air pollution has on our State, the benefit of a strong well-funded Air Resources Board far outweighs the cost of not having one.

- For example, an annual value of over \$3.5 billion is associated with hospitalizations and the treatment of major and minor illnesses, and about 2.8 million lost workdays each year, are all related to air pollution exposure in California.
- The technical and severe nature of the subject matter requires an expert Board and a continued presence to further the battle against air pollution and to restore public health.
- The alternative is simply not acceptable.

Some key points I would like to make beyond the recommendations is that many parts of state government can be made "more efficient" and "customer oriented" as Project CPR suggests. This is a laudable goal for agencies like the DMV, the Franchise Tax Board, and the Department of Corrections.

However, in the case of environmental agencies CPR's ideas for "efficiency" translate into cutting funding and reducing the public's role in environmental protection. It's ideas for "customer oriented" reform are to make regulation weaker for the parties who pollute our air and water.

The "customer" isn't the industries who create pollution (as CPR suggests); they are the lungs of small children in Fresno who have the highest incidences of asthma in the state and the health of the elderly who suffer from lung disease from air pollution.

We can make our air cleaner with greater efficiencies but eliminating ARB is not the way to do it.

We cannot afford to eliminate ARB for "perceived" efficiencies.

In this case, the "efficiency" of eliminating ARB would be more than offset by increased costs in health, economic and federal sanctions.

Lastly, I believe the changes we make related to environmental protection will define who we are as community leaders. We must decide if we are on the side of children who should breathe clean air or industries that like to pollute more. For me the decision is clear, I will side with our future and hope that this Commission recommends to the Governor to do the same.